

# HEADPRESS 2.2

the gospel according to UNPOPULAR CULTURE



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## Headitorial

This is a photograph. An inscription on the reverse of the picture suggests it was taken December 8, 1959. The bar is empty except for the curiously framed individuals at the centre of it, who remain unknown, like the place and nature of the celebration. More unknown is the person to the right, represented only by a reaching hand. What you don't see is the hand to the left, holding the bar. Or the photographer.

*[David Kerekes]*

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**HEADPRESS 2.2** The Gospel  
According to Unpopular Culture™





**ARISE SINGALONGACHARLIE**



"If that judge asks  
for my life I'm going  
to give it to him...  
but first of all he  
is going to have to  
deal with my music"  
— Charles Manson

## A photograph

records a man, perhaps in his mid thirties, with shoulder length hair, parted in the centre, and a neatly trimmed goatee beard. The man's wide-open eyes are fixed just off to the side and seem to convey a fierce mania. To some the picture is silly; to others it is a terrifying portrait of evil.

This image of Charles Manson, the ultimate hippie leader with a difference, began as a police mug shot and then became the cover shot for *Life* magazine. While the story of his life and times is well known (the arrival of each Manson 'anniversary' is marked with feature films, documentaries, magazine articles and more interviews) those once close to Manson — chief prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi, stars like Dennis Wilson, Sharon Tate, Doris Day — have come to be defined by their proximity to his potent presence. Manson = pure evil: Mike Tyson famously once stated: "Look, I'm a bad guy, but I'm not Charles Manson."





The advent of the internet has seen an explosion of Manson goods, trivia and opinion. The malevolence of Manson's cult has entered cyberspace. Manson, because of the bizarre nature of the killings associated with him, now more than ever epitomises the notion of 'apocalypse culture'.

Yet despite the ubiquity of the legend of Charles Manson, Manson's recorded music remains somewhat indistinct. It's easy to forget that the picture described above is also a record sleeve — of one of the most infamous records of all time. Despite the internet, Manson's music still contains an 'underground' vibe. While everyone knows of 'Charles Manson' few have actually listened to his recordings. Music is the glue that sticks Manson to his friends, his fellow travellers, his 'Family', his enemies. It is through music that Manson connected (via the group The Milky Way) with Bobby Beausoleil (composer of Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer Rising* soundtrack and according to Truman Capote "the real mystery figure of the Charles Manson cult"). Also with the Beach Boys, Neil Young and the Beatles. You could argue that the Manson story (to quote Beausoleil) "is all music". Those that speak of Manson do so not with words but, according to David Felton and David Dalton, in "noises, guttural sound effects, gasps, shrieks". The musicality of such expressions mirrors the coyote yips and cries that Manson and his followers utilised for communication while awaiting trial for murder.

## It's all music

**One of Manson's purest legacies is** his audio recordings. Manson is described as a 'man with a thousand faces' and this is reflected in his music. The many studies of Manson's crimes claim to pay due attention to his musical output. But all too often the writer is distracted back to the vivid and still shocking killings that belong to the Manson legend. Music is the principle reason why Manson is still a figure of intrigue and obsession and maintains the countercultural credibility that other killers patently lack.

## Helter Skelter

**Manson's association with the** giants of rock music became a kind of creepy subconscious epitomising the time when rock met the counterculture, the moment when revolt rubbed shoulders with wealth. With the Beach Boys (through their drummer and hidden genius Dennis Wilson, who called Manson "the wizard") this was a physical connection. With the Beatles it was psychic, imaginary. Manson deliberated over the Beatles' eponymous 1968 LP (aka the 'White Album') with the studious devotion of a monk. It's no surprise he and his followers became obsessed with that record and that Beatles' lyrics were repeated in Manson 'sermons' ("The glass onion is the door of water and the hole in the ocean is the pool in Death Valley").



Manson quoted The Ballad Of John And Yoko — identifying himself with the Christ figure in the song. The Manson reading of the 'White Album' was the first of many such fascinations with the record's sound, image and content. Early Manson historians such as Bugliosi and Ed Sanders detected the eerie power of the record. Its minimalist blank white cover invites open interpretation, the kinds of experimental freethinking that the epoch — through mind-altering chemicals and radical head theories — invoked. The LP seems to speak to the future of rock music whilst detonating the idealism and egotism of the 1960s pop explosion. Importantly, both followers of Manson and Manson himself have noted how he did not otherwise draw on the music of sixties counterculture for inspiration; he was a disciple of the postwar crooners (Sinatra, Perry Como, Bing Crosby etc.) and like the composers of the 'White Album' drew on whatever felt right to express feeling and emotion through song. Charles Watson claimed that when he first listened to the 'White Album' with Manson in December 1968 he "ran from him" and devotion to the record was intense. Author Joan Didion named her account of the madness and paranoia of the age after the record (the most disturbing thing about the Tate-La Bianca murders amongst Didion's LA tribe was her recollection that "no one was surprised"). Groups like the Rolling Stones packaged and resold violence and revolt in an immature and egotistical way. The Beatles' form of the occult was more complex, hidden and more profound.

'Lance Fairweather' made an interesting comment when he said: "If *Abbey Road* had come out sooner, maybe there would not have been a murder, maybe Sharon Tate would be alive today." But then *Abbey Road* had its dark moments, too.

## Outsider Music?

**Manson's recording sessions were few.** The release of his music has been covert and, in terms of quality, erratic. This is a symptom of the general conflict between Manson and the music business. As a free spirit, guided by whim, Manson is the sort of musical artist that confounds the production of highly commodified recorded music. Manson believed that music was the key to communicating ideas: "Music doesn't know time, music is soul... it stays in your infinite unconscious." On Manson's first recordings it is discernible that he feels, like most first time recording artistes, uncomfortable: giggling nervously; self conscious. The process of recording music kills spontaneity and so in this respect Manson was in accord with the key figures in the folk revival of the 1950s who detested the reduction of love and communal forms of music-making by the industrialisation of folk music to another product for mass consumption. The intrusive aspect of studio recording frustrated Manson. "I never really dug recording. You go into the studio and it's hard to sing into microphones," he said. The obsession with a perfect recording, with





total separation, making mixing smoother, was impossible to apply to the manner in which Manson and his 'group' liked to perform. An insight into the spontaneous nature of Manson's creativity is sometimes captured in filmed interviews. During one interview for example, Manson attempts to launch into a spontaneous percussive improvisation with a plastic waste bin. As might a jazz musician, Manson improvises his way out of a corner. "I am my music. I play my music for me," was his refrain.

More broadly, anyone familiar with the machinations of the music business will recognise the way in which Manson was 'ripped-off' by producers, the administrators and legal guardians of the industry. The entertainment industry in California found Manson and his followers interesting and various film projects capturing their crazy lifestyle and behaviour were planned. "I really appreciate your talent Charlie, but there's nothing I can do for you," Terry Melcher eventually told Manson. But was it Manson's limitations that were at fault or the music business' lack of imagination? Despite allowing the Beach Boys permission to use one of his songs Manson was never paid. "You know what Manson? You're a flaky little nothing," he was told when he went to recoup the royalties that he was owed. Manson did not forget the way he was treated by the music industry. "If you've lied and broken someone's trust, I have no control over what happens," he told one disgruntled bootlegger of his music. Manson's official psychiatric diagnosis is that he is a "passive-aggressive personality with paranoid tendencies". I can think of few better descriptions of the psychology of pop and rock stars.

## Jail Guitar Doors

**Manson's guitar playing is worth** scrutinising in greater detail. A guitar has always been one of his most prized possessions. His guitar is supposedly buried somewhere in Death Valley "awaiting his escape". Unlike most folk rock of the time and the blues tradition of steel string guitar playing, he prefers to use a nylon strung Spanish guitar and never finger-

picks his guitar. This type of guitar is difficult to impose in a dominant way over vocals and other instruments as it is clearly designed to be played solo or with a single vocal accompaniment (think of the British singer-songwriter Jake Thackray). While Manson is often associated with psychedelic rock guitarist Bobby Beausoleil, it is clear to see that he was never a pop or rock musician in the traditional sense. In addition to the type of guitar Manson used, his chord progressions go beyond the usual forms of pop and rock music. He makes use of the sixth and unresolved major seventh chords that are more commonly



found in Latin music. Manson frequently uses open chords that ring out more forcefully (E and A major and minor chords). This style marks Manson's music as out of the ordinary. There are elements of blues in Manson's music but it is nearer to the blues of the desert, a sacred place for the Family. But then traditional blues music is an assertion of an aggressive form of male sexuality, something not clearly exhibited in Manson's songs. Manson performed as a troubadour, as *Life* magazine dubbed him: a "roving minstrel".

Before the killings were linked to Manson, and before the sixties dream fell the wrong side of the razor's edge, his music was a meandering search for a timeless, spiritual life in place of the exterior controls of the state mechanism. Manson himself eventually said: "How are you going to get to the establishment? You can't sing to them." Jeff Nuttall suggested of this time that the outlaw's gesture and his honesty might "lead to public murder". So it proved. Manson's music is the perfect expression of how when "pleasure is outlawed, and people who celebrate love openly are jailed, violence has become a way of attaining intimacy with other humans" (George Paul Csicsery). Perhaps there is some glimpse of this in the songs that Manson composed, but what we hear is not the adolescent worship of a death cult that his imitators have turned out. His statement: "Music seldom gets to grownups. It gets through to the young mind that's still open," reveals the importance of sound in communicating ideas

and thoughts. Hence the fearful power of music: to alter consciousness and open minds to influence like a drug.

Charles Manson's own opinion of his forays with and without other Family members into the world of rock stardom are sanguine: "I guess the girls and I blew it." "Manson was striking out at the establishment," Bugliosi told me and the music establishment was clearly part of that target. An early review of Manson's *LIE* LP ended "Charles Manson, the record industry welcomes you with open arms."

They never did.

Of the recordings currently available of Charles Manson's music none are official releases. Even *LIE* is a collection of high quality demos elevated to the status of a proper LP. This is one reason why it is easy to dismiss Manson's music: it sounds rough and incomplete. But perhaps this is how Manson should be confronted. Manson was never about capturing an essence on tape but about the expression of a moment. There follows a review of the key Manson recordings. It is not exhaustive, as many recordings have been sneaked out of whichever prison Manson resides. In my view it is still better to listen to Manson's original music than anything that came after.

# THE LOVE AND TERROR SET

*"I got some music that says what I like to say if I  
ever had anything to say"*

—from the sleeve notes to LIE



THIS LP REPRESENT RECORDINGS MADE BY CHARLES MANSON PRIOR TO THE TATE-LABIANCA MURDERS. THERE WAS SOME SPECULATION AT THE TIME, THAT A RECORD PRODUCER WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY OWNED THE TATE HOME AND WHO HAD EARLIER REJECTED MANSON'S RECORDINGS, WAS THE INTENDED TARGET. THIS THEORY WAS SUBSEQUENTLY DISPROVEN. HOWEVER, EVERY PRODUCER MANSON HAD APPROACHED WITH HIS RECORDINGS ULTIMATELY RECEIVED DEATH THREATS AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER, AND IT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY SHOWN THAT MANSON HAD TARGETED FOR ASSASSINATION A NUMBER OF FAMOUS RECORDING ARTISTS WHOSE ONLY CRIME WAS THEIR

**SUMMER**

1967 Made in Canada

**LIE** was recorded in Sound City studios, Van Nuys exactly one year before the date of the Tate-La Bianca killings. The recordings were initially issued by Phil Kaufman and of the original 2,000 copies, by 1972 less than 300 had been sold. Kaufman's record label was called Awareness, a reference to Manson's claim that he held special powers of perception: "I look into the future like an Indian on a trail." The cover image is now legendary and features a police photograph of Manson that was taken in 1968 when he was arrested on an auto theft charge. The 'mad' hypnotic stare was to become the defining image of Manson, an image as loaded as Albert Korda's portrait of 'Che' Guevara, a man capable of the same hypnotic power. Free ads for the LP ran in many underground and countercultural newspapers of the time. Profits from Kaufman's issue of the record were said to be in support of Manson's legal defence; now they supposedly go to his victims.

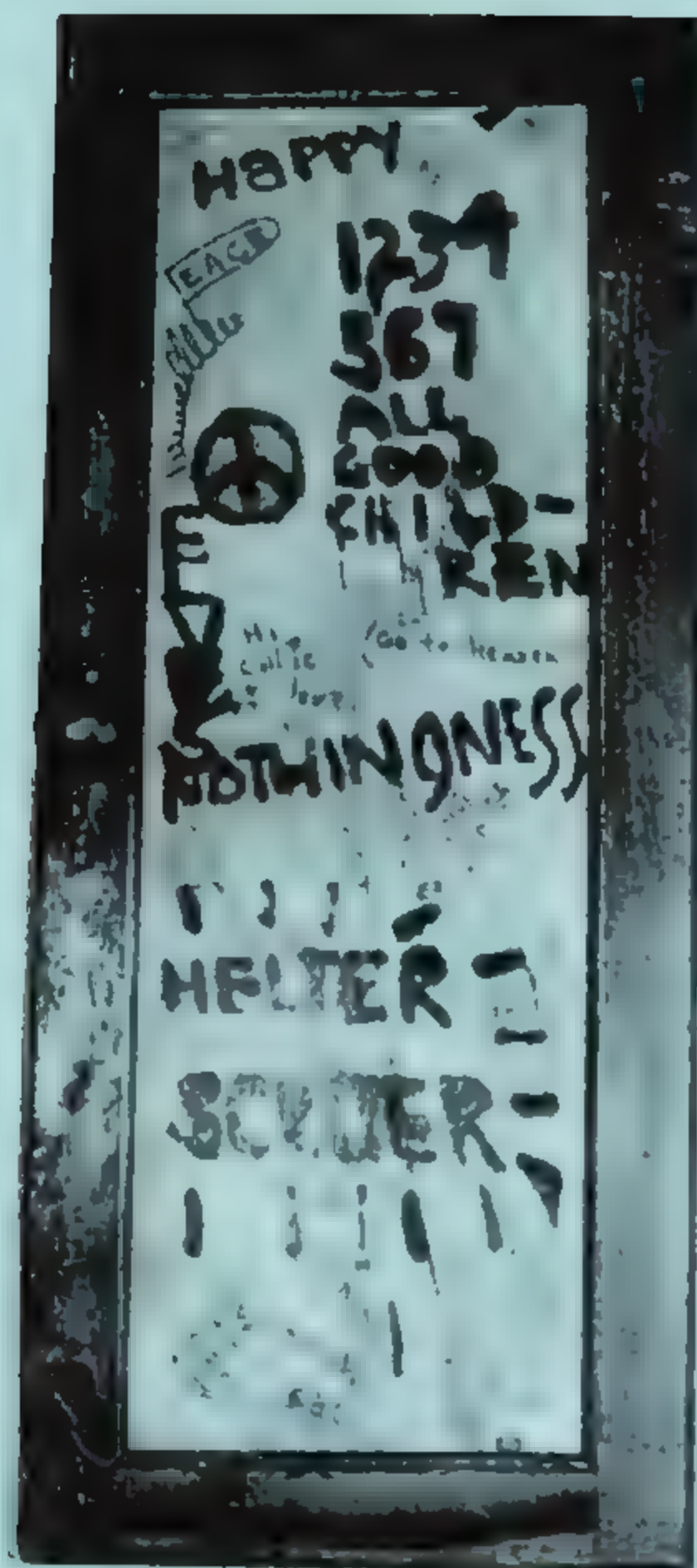
In these recordings we hear what Jakobson noted was Manson's "early form of Rap". A percussive beat on the guitar is overlaid with a free flow of consciousness, thoughts and expressions located in both the internal space and via external manifestations (flies buzzing, his shoes, someone passing by). Manson plays his songs here to relay his philosophy. Manson was accompanied by Paul Watkins and Bobby Beausoleil. Some of the more complex electric guitar lines belonged to the latter.



Beausoleil once observed that "Charlie doesn't have a whole lot of talent" and Dennis Wilson observed that "Charlie did not have a musical bone in his body." This is the myth that has grown up around Manson and his music and one can hear from this recording that this is wrong.

**Look At Your Game Girl** has a plaintive opening with strummed single chords. "Time keeps on flying" mourns Manson and in this moment you can feel how his charisma hypnotized so many. Anyone listening closely this song will feel this transference of energy and motion. Manson said of Ego "Ego is the man, the male image" and this song is clearly a denunciation of the male psyche. "You can't stand not be right" and "Ego is a too much thing," sings Manson. The backing on this track is a strong blend of congas and sitar, augmented with improvised violin (Manson's violinist was usually Catherin Share, aka Gypsy) and occasional blasts from a hunting horn. The unusual blend of instruments is reminiscent of early Incredible String Band. **Mechanical Man** is a song about people versus the machine, a common countercultural scenario. It is also about how humans *become* machines and recalls Charles Watson's description of how he felt during the murders: "I felt like a mechanical man, a programmed machine out of control, like a malfunctioned robot unable to stop the brutality." It begins with imitations of mechanical sounds and a spoken-word section. The song becomes a powerful drone and recalls early Velvet Underground. Female voices cut in and out, one of them wails in despair. The music becomes more frantic and chaotic. The autobiographical line "I am my mother's toy" draws on Manson's childhood years of neglect. The theme of the song later inspired the musical and lyrical preoccupations of the new wave band Devo, who, like Manson hailed from Ohio. **People Say I'm No Good** reflects Manson's own feelings of rejection. It begins as a mournful cry with sparse accompaniment from his nylon-stringed guitar. But soon it becomes more strident and the internal pain and frustration becomes defiantly anti-establishment, against conformity





casting blame outwards: "Look at the fix they're in...the young might be so dumb after all." This section of the song is very percussive with a strong bongo rhythm. The poetic flourish ends with the spoken phrase "cancer of the mind". Home is Where You're Happy proclaims the peace brought about from the creation of a true family as opposed to the official nuclear version that many of Manson's followers suffered terribly under. "You'll never be alone" is the positive alternative vibe sent out. There are more Sterling Morrison-inflected guitar lines in Arkansas and on this track female vocals are prominent, breathy at the beginning, spoken, decrying 'struggle' before Manson interjects with the song proper. I'll Never Say Never To Always is interesting in that the ambience of Family musical get-togethers can be clearly discerned. There are babies crying in the background and the whole effect, a good snapshot of the communal experience of the Family, is of a Sunday school choir reciting an ode to spiritual joy. Garbage Dump reveals Manson's long-standing eco-concerns: "You can feed the world with my garbage dump," a belief that was realised in the infamous family 'garbage runs' to collect cast off food from supermarket bins (still a common eco-warrior



practice). Manson's sense of humour is manifest at the end. Don't Do Anything Illegal has the feel of an Eastern drone — another clichéd character of 1960s music, augmented by fine electric guitar work courtesy of Beausoleil. "The eagle has got you by the neck" sings Manson, a clear indictment of American state oppression. Sick City castigates those that "sit at home and drink your beer." With Cease To Exist, the most famous song on *LIE*, it is clear why the Beach Boys were keen to record it. Dennis Wilson changed the lyrics lifting the line "Never learn not to love you" as the new title -- an act that infuriated Manson (Manson: "Dennis Wilson was killed by my shadow because he took my music and didn't pay me and changed the words from my soul, sound songs"). The version that appeared on the Beach Boys recordings uses the common 1960s technique of time shifts (4/4 to 3/4 time) and begins with an eerie swell of discordant noise (a tape run backwards) before launching into the more familiar harmonies of the group. "Submission is a gift" intones the dark aesthetics of countercultural drug philosophy. For Manson, the meaning of the words as they come out of your mouth is the truth. It should not be altered — especially for some crass commercial purposes. In Cease To Exist Manson relates his philosophy as outlined in the following quote: "You are not you, you are just a reflection, you are

reflections of everything that you think that you know, everything you have been taught." Big Iron Door is a dark portrait of incarceration in American prisons, again switching time signatures from slow to fast and intense. The minor key and discordant chord changes add to the feel of disorientation. I Once Knew A Man begins with Spanish guitar inflections and frantic conga/maraca support. One can imagine this song ringing out across the desert, a freak-out *cri de coeur*. As if to underline the commercial potential of Manson's compositions, the final track on *LIE*, Eyes Of A Dreamer, has lovely acoustic guitar lines and gallops along in a style closely resembling a Walker Brothers tune.

The general consensus about *LIE* (and indeed all of Manson's music) seems to be 'Well, I've heard worse'. But *LIE* clearly demonstrated why Manson led the musical activities of the Family. While other Family members are noted to be 'better' musicians (Beausoleil, Share, Grogan), listening to this collection of songs, it is clear that Manson had by far the richest voice and a unique style that mere technical efficiency cannot attain. He made effective use of his "total energy". Ed Sanders is not the only one who believed that Manson "could have been a big star".





## (aka **THE SUMMER OF HATE**)

Recorded at Gold Star Studios, Hollywood, November 1967. Produced by Gary Stromberg. These were the earliest recordings of Manson's music and have a quality even rougher than the recordings that made *LIE*. Here, Manson, generally unaccompanied, is less confident than he sounds on *LIE* and intersperses the songs with general chatter, raps, laughing and a long string of aphorisms. Nevertheless, the songs are some of Manson's best and are worth examining in greater detail. The energy levels are tangibly more heightened compared to later recordings. The musicality of Manson's songs cuts through.

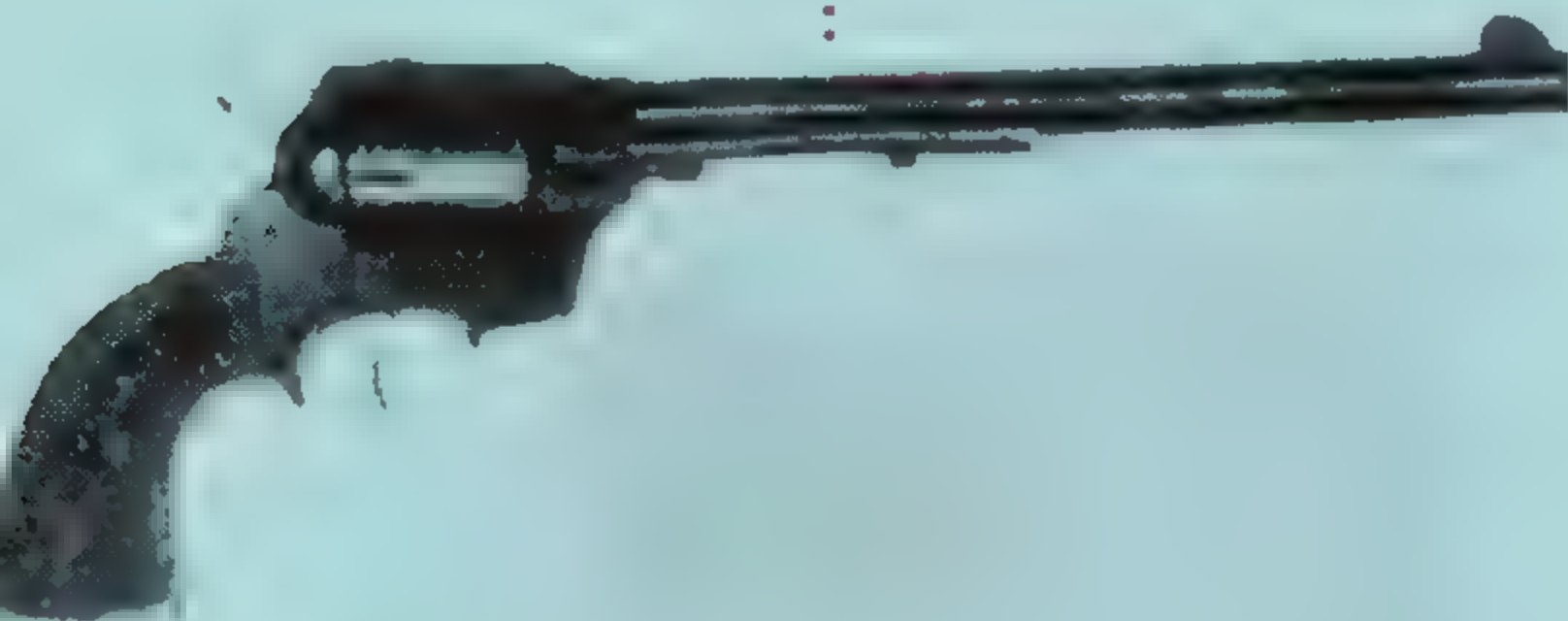
Devil Man draws on the blues spirit of early American popular music. A simple two-chord phrase is repeated and then speeds up. Manson's subconscious spills out into the track: "the devil man swings the blues." The More You Love also utilises a simple two-chord tonal refrain overlaid with the kind of skeining melody that characterises many 1960s outlaw songs. Phrases expressing an attack on hypocrisy that Manson clearly found appealing get thrown into the songs such as 'the sound of one-hand clapping' and become repetitive chants. Two Pair Of Shoes deals with one of Manson's pet hates: consumer waste culture. Here Manson's preference for major sixth guitar chords (which can easily be played by accident) is striking. Maiden With Green Eyes (Remember Me), although driven by a rumba rhythm, has a medieval narrative sensibility but also the tone of 1950s doo-wop that Manson grew up with. The phrase "remember me" would not sound out of place in songs by Bobby Vinton, Dion or John Leyton. Swamp



This image and the one on page 6 are taken from inserts that came with the above untitled Manson boot.

Girl, although like all these tracks sparse, manages to feel operatic with its frequent shifts and varied sections. Bet You Think I Care has a smooth chord progression akin to Simon and Garfunkel's The 59th Street Bridge Song (Feelin' Groovy) and exhibits the folk/pop style that flooded America and the UK in the early 1960s. Another

you a lot of money" and it could pass for a competent late sixties peace song. Close To Me is structured around jazz progressions. Perhaps Sinatra could have performed it? "I got some songs that other people could sing" introduces a medley of three tunes that complete the recordings supposedly written by a fellow con and based on



favourite Manson guitar trick heard here is the semi-tone/tone slide chord. True Love You Will Never Find, Invisible Tears, This Is Night Life and My World are brilliant folk protest/doo-wop hybrids. Invisible Tears should have been used by Kenneth Anger in *Scorpio Rising* and the latter, with its clever key change, would have happily worked in a David Lynch film. The House Of Tomorrow opens with Manson claiming "this will make

prison life — loss, deceit, loneliness. It is a narrative concluding with the release and return to family life.

This session also features earlier versions of Look At Your Game Girl, People Say I'm No Good (Who To Blame here) and Sick City, slower and less atmospheric versions than the later recordings on *LIE*. Despite encouragement from producer Gary Stromberg to "do whatever comes



into your head”, it’s clear that the sheer range of styles and forms that Manson draws on only to abandon when he gets bored would have been hard for any executive to ‘market’.



**This low-fi recording is one of the more recent records of Manson’s musical output.** San Quentin is a place of strong resonance for Manson. He was originally lodged here on death row after his trial and sentence in 1970. He has returned to the prison on several occasions since then. On the occasion of his return in 1985, when a piece of hacksaw blade was found hidden in his shoe, these live recordings were made. The title of the record pays homage to the legendary concert by Johnny Cash made and recorded at the prison in 1969.

This recording presents the latest in reflections on the state of mind of Manson. It offers an interesting glimpse into what an audience with Manson is like, reverting from songs to philosophising and the constant interruptions of everyday life into the Manson space. The songs are improvised. Television Mind demonstrates Manson’s capacity still for critiquing consumer, technological culture.

The cover is interesting, designed as it is to look like the Beach Boys legendary but over-rated *Pet Sounds* LP. Pressed on yellow vinyl, the original sleeve was a picture taken through a wire fence of Manson being led by guards through the prison grounds. The CD used a colour picture of a wizened Manson holding his highly decorated acoustic guitar.







## THE LOST SONGS OF CHARLES MANSON THE MURDERERS' RECORDING MANSON THE LOST SONGS OF CHARLES MANSON THE MURDERERS' RECORDING

**Manson's 'lost' songs recorded in 1970 by Family members, including Steve Grogan (guitar), Brenda and Country Sue (vocals) and Catherine Share (violin).**

This much-maligned LP is often characterised as being a recording of Manson's brainwashed dupes singing around the campfire in sympathy and association with the absence of Charles Manson's body through the continuum of his spirit through musical means. "How can they sound so happy when they are vicious murderers?" seems to be the general line of enquiry. The answer to this is not that difficult. The people involved in this recording are expressing their own world, the haven of the desert and their ranches, the wide open spaces, the natural elements, the retreat to Death Valley and the AIR TREES WATER ANIMALS philosophy that would later define Manson's post confinement actions. These songs epitomise 'desert music': a statement of friendship and faith in Manson and his beliefs. Again, the quality of the recordings does not assist easy engagement with the music on the record. As Jeff Nuttall once noted of the 1960s: "Young people are not correcting society. They are regurgitating it". The Manson family would gather under the clear skies and stars to sing these songs. They continued to intone the songs at Manson's defence, the beautiful harmonies seeming eerie in the context of a mass-murder trial. Steve Grogan appears the most prominent performer on these recordings but the Manson 'girls'



provide a haunting (heavily drenched in reverb) chorus as backing (but not always 'backing' as they sing the main lines of the songs as well as 'call and response' vocals). The songs are noticeably darker than the earlier solo Manson recordings, lacking any sense of the humour present in those sessions. The opening driving track in a minor key, Ra-Hide Away, pleads that they "let him go". The song is a western epic set to communal folk singing. The Fires Are Burning is a terrifying and atmospheric minor-key song mythologizing the intense heat of love. If you were looking for a song to epitomise the dark hypnotic power of the psyche of Manson's Family then Die To Be One would be it. A plaintive violin played by Share wavers throughout the song. Die To Be One is a continuation of the Cease To Exist philosophy: come together, lose your ego, become nature, death is a new beginning. "Up the valley of death they come" begins No Wrong — Come Along as witchy chants lure the wanderer and lost soul into the realms of the Family. The calls heard are those of the coyote howls loved and revered by Manson. Get On Home is a roots song about the natural world of the drop-out farmscape. Is There No One In Your World But You? contains a haunting and evocative ghostly backing chorus. First They Made Me Sleep In The Closet uses a cheery and comic setting for a dire tale of childhood neglect (a favourite Manson theme). The record also includes the unofficial Family anthem I'll Never Say Never To Always here performed with a guitar backing.

Opposite: Manson August 1978,  
playing in the chapel.

The maniacal laughing that opens If I Had A Million Dollars, extended beyond the duration that would be comfortable, still has the power to disturb.

The music on this record is a pale imitation of the effectiveness of the communal 'family' process of singing (compare to the quality of Lyman Family recordings for example). This is also the result of a poor recording process. Yet these recordings still demonstrate the effectiveness of Manson's song writing skills, and show that he was easily as gifted as many more famous and legitimate singers and songwriters.

*Everything in life  
is good*

*"Everything in life is good. It all flows. It's  
all good. It's all music"...*  
— Bobby Beausoleil

**Charles Manson's music is** designed to connect and communicate with the outside world. If his records had been released officially (instead of endlessly bootlegged) it is estimated they would qualify for a gold disc (sales over 500,000 copies). Manson's music is a form of outsider art; the work of an autodidact musician with a totally unique presentation style and perspective. It is foolish to expect and believe that Manson's music is a form of 'devil rock'. The cover versions and the tributes to his underground aesthetic have nothing at all to do with his own musical expressions, they are more about reflecting and interpreting the myth of Manson built up over the



last forty years. One of the reasons this myth endures is that showbusiness has found irresistible the lure of a charismatic and messianic musician who is capable of actual murder. Unlike the rockers who for years have played at being evil and dangerous (with dire consequences), Manson is a figure that carried those fantasies into reality. Like the early blues singers that sang of the despair in the world and then were tragically killed (or did kill), Manson rears up as an image of the true face of human tragedy. Manson is described as a "natural product of what you get when you cross a groovy subculture with a brutalizing system" and music has a powerful role to play in this. The Manson crimes disappear but are internalized in the mental sphere, leaving what Baudrillard calls an occult trace. Music plays an essential role in this process.

There may be other Manson recordings. Vincent Bugliosi told me that Dennis Wilson had made some recordings of Manson at Santa Monica but that he had destroyed the tapes: "The vibes were not of this world" Wilson alleged. Manson's music, like most of what he did, is hated and feared. But this makes me think of the words of Thom Gunn:

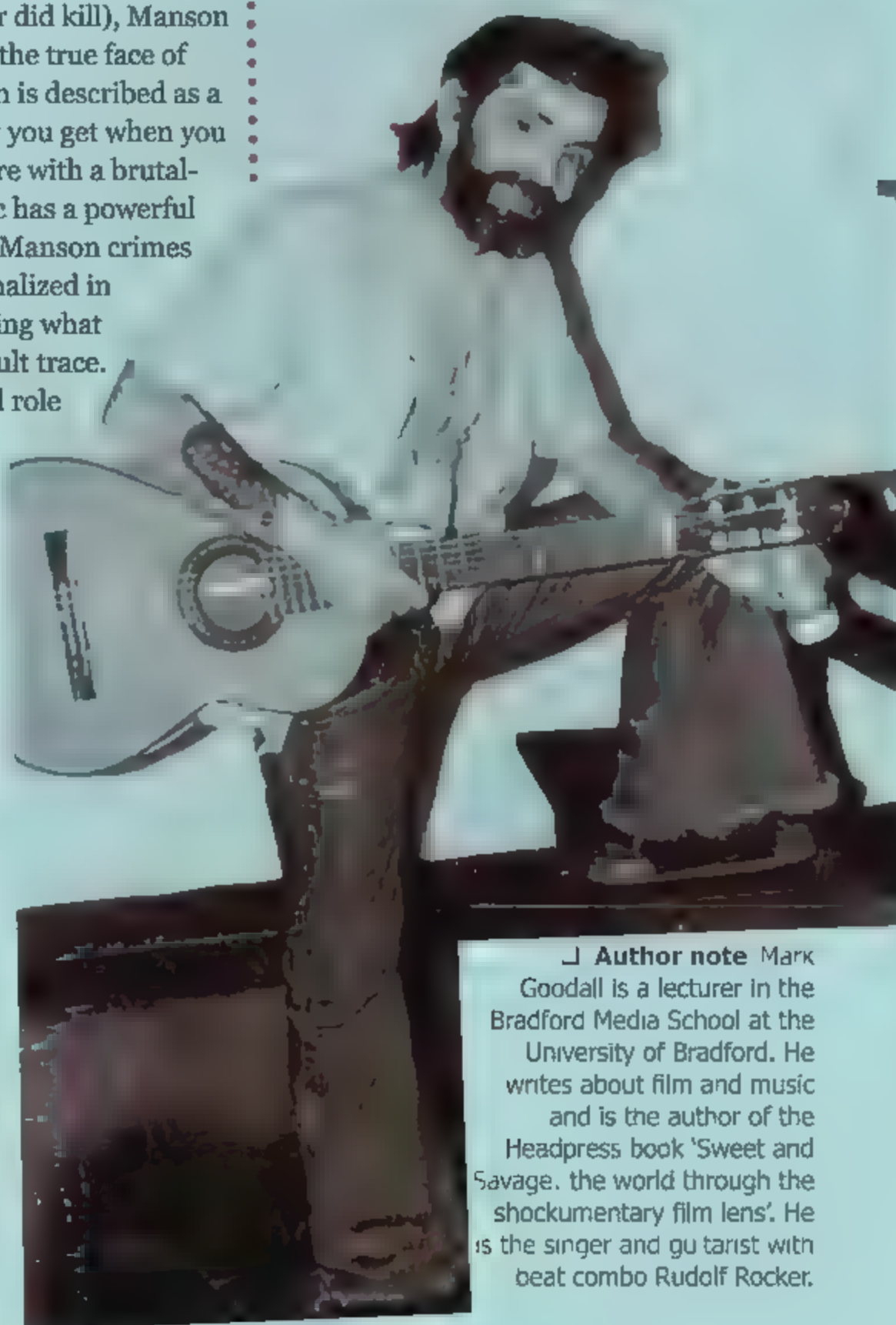
The reason I detest you,  
Is the same reason I

detest Charles Manson,

For his interpretation of songs on the White Album ..

But he was less cynical than you, he believed in his interpretations, he acted on them

Perhaps Manson was not the only musician to kill the 1960s? ■



└ **Author note** Mark Goodall is a lecturer in the Bradford Media School at the University of Bradford. He writes about film and music and is the author of the Headpress book 'Sweet and Savage. the world through the shockumentary film lens'. He is the singer and guitarist with beat combo Rudolf Rocker.

When England racked up a long losing streak in World Cup competitions, a Kenya-based juju man wrote to the team manager in advance of the 1990 World Cup offering his services. "Your team has fared disastrously since winning the World Cup in 1966," Abubakar Shariff Omar wrote. "You may not know the reason but it is because they lack the magic charm that has helped other teams" (England did not take up the offer.)

New York Times




**FOOTBALL & THE PHARMAKOS**





... MAGIC AND THE WORLD CUP  
text **Thomas McGrath** art **Dan White**



**N**ot owning a television, I hired one prior to the 2006 World Cup. Meant to signify my determination not to permanently acquire the accursed box as much as my devotion to the tournament, this symbolic act wasn't as easy as I had assumed, requiring that I travel all the way down to Clapham Common from Hackney to what was apparently London's last television rental outlet. There I had to cough up thirty quid (plus £15 deposit) for a small, decrepit set surely worth no more than twenty-five.

After I had plugged it in, and spent about an hour attempting to strain the fuzzy picture with a thousand sly tweaks of the loop aerial, the tinny speakers quietly popped, smothering every game in maddening white noise. After the tournament, the prospect of hauling it back to Clapham didn't appeal, and the forty-five pound set languished in a cupboard for a few months before finally being dumped in the street for Hackney Council.

Ah, but I was a picture of sublime idiocy that day, rattling up the Northern line, with the television bouncing on my knees and a dumb grin scything my cheeks. And I did indeed brave the sonic assault to watch every possible game right up to England's eventual exit, the day after which I woke up with the usual chest pains. Recently, as the same bovine elation began to swell with the approach of South Africa 2010, I had the disquieting revelation that, were England to actually lift the hallowed trophy, I would literally weep with joy. Odd that. Absurd in fact. How was it football had managed to evolve from pig's bladder to human heart? I had moments where I was convinced that some esoteric dimension, diabolical or divine, underpinned the sport's hypnotic clutch on the world, an appeal ratcheted up by the heady context of international competition...



I DISINTERRED this old theory after happening upon some footage of the England-Argentina quarter final from France 98. It showed a babyfaced Beckham lying on his belly in the wake of a foul, glancing over his shoulder, and raising a limp foreleg, over which an Argentinean, backing towards it, melodramatically tumbled. Although the trip was meant to be lame, and the fall a transparent dive, it was as if I glimpsed, beneath this pseudo-surface, a still deeper layer of fiction. In fact the whole thing, for a reality splitting second, looked entirely choreographed, the perception exacerbated by the referee's raising of the red card — always a particularly stagy moment in the theatre of dreams.

My thoughts meandered to Wayne Rooney's comparable dismissal eight years later, again during a quarter final England would go on to lose. Rooney, entwined between the legs of two Portuguese midfielders, stamped down on the crotch of one, right in front of the referee, who stepped across to banish this England hero with the familiar red. Again, watching it over, it all looked a little staged (now enhanced by Cristiano Ronaldo's villainous wink at the Portuguese bench). The two incidents, where the country's designated hero was sent off in a quarter final of a World Cup, preceding the team's exit, were almost identical.

A final recollection — surely requiring just two words: Zidane's headbutt. The whiff of the stage pervades

this encounter in particular — if only opponents had previously known that a few whispered words about his mother, or sister, or race (Materazzi's exact slander has remained tantalizingly obscure) could liberate the pitch from the tyranny of Zidane's genius! Even so, you'd certainly think that, during a World Cup Final, shouldering the hope of the entire French nation, the player might have been able to restrain himself for an hour or two. But apparently not. Up trotted the referee, out came the red, and off stalked Zidane. France, as if surrendering to that same potent gravity, went on to lose.

Ambling down this rabbit hole, I wondered whether those seeming set-pieces mightn't be acts of grandiose sorcery. It brought the prevailing occult hypothesis to mind: that mass reality is only a chimera, draped over us by a cabal of pagan magicians, a vast work of art where the suspension of disbelief is guaranteed, facilitating our blind participation in colossal rituals. A national side certainly bears a great deal of projected emotion — perhaps the pooled hope of tens of millions of souls is an irresistible concoction for those alchemical meddlers alleged to rule the world. I speculated that this mystical bounty could only be surreptitiously reaped, prior to the eruption of despair or joy that greets conclusive defeat or victory. The 'sacrifice of the hero' I had observed could have fallen straight out of the pages of *The Golden Bough*: maybe such superstar scapegoats disappear into the tunnel laden with an invisible bounty

of unimaginable power and value — shaking off their sackcloth to click their cloven hooves. Did others see the sport as I was beginning to — a vast archetypal Masque, a central ritual of the clandestine religion?

Not many, as it happened. Football tended to leave the majority of occultists stone cold. There were whispers, of course, the usual bits and bobs: the first official rules of the game were thought to have been drawn up in Covent Garden's Freemasons Arms; the twenty-two players on a pitch correspond to the number of branches in the cabbalistic tree of life; the tessellated black hexagrams that adorned the old fashioned balls were a potent occult pattern; José Mourinho and Ronaldinho were among those in the game notorious for their repertoire of occult hand gestures...

I DISCOVERED an author called Chris Roberts was due to publish a book called *Football Voodoo* in time for the coming World Cup. It was too good an opportunity to pass by, and Roberts agreed to meet me on the South Bank to discuss his research. The demonic disarray of the Thames skyline was especially unsettling, the cold May evening of our rendezvous. Roberts was a little late, leaving me

to watch skaters twisting their boards through the air as some skater groupies stared on — teenage girls too young to have acquired proper contempt for the

male passion of rotating objects in three-dimensional space.

My interviewee was a warm, engaging and energetic Evertonian, and a professional librarian, publisher, author and London tour guide who at that moment was brimming with fascinating gossip about football's esoteric underbelly. Roberts explained how much of his work scrutinised the grey area where sporting superstition slipped into outright black magic; turns out one could fairly paraphrase Napoleon: 'Scratch a footballer, find a Tartar.'

"Take David James. He admits to always taking a piss in the same urinal before a game, and then spitting into it afterwards. Now if you go back to Pliny the Elder, in the first century, you'll find this is the de rigueur way of breaking a curse. Not that David James knows this. I think."

As you would expect in a game capable of resuscitating economies and dethroning governments, in football people commonly resort to any advantage they believe to be effective, and in a global game this often embraces outright black magic. Roberts told me how he has devised a nifty Voodometer for the approaching World Cup on the book's accompanying blog.



"So when Switzerland or Slovakia play it isn't going to make much noise. But if, say, Cameroon and Brazil clash: it'll go through the roof!"

I mentioned the widespread reports that South African voodoo doctors had been seeking permission to sacrifice animals in the designated World Cup stadiums, nominally citing the purely religious importance of the ritual, though most bystanders saw it as an attempt to influence games.

"But this is anathema to the South African FA," laughed Chris. "There's this quote from one of them: 'we don't want voodoo doctors on the terraces any more than we want cannibals in the concession stands.'"

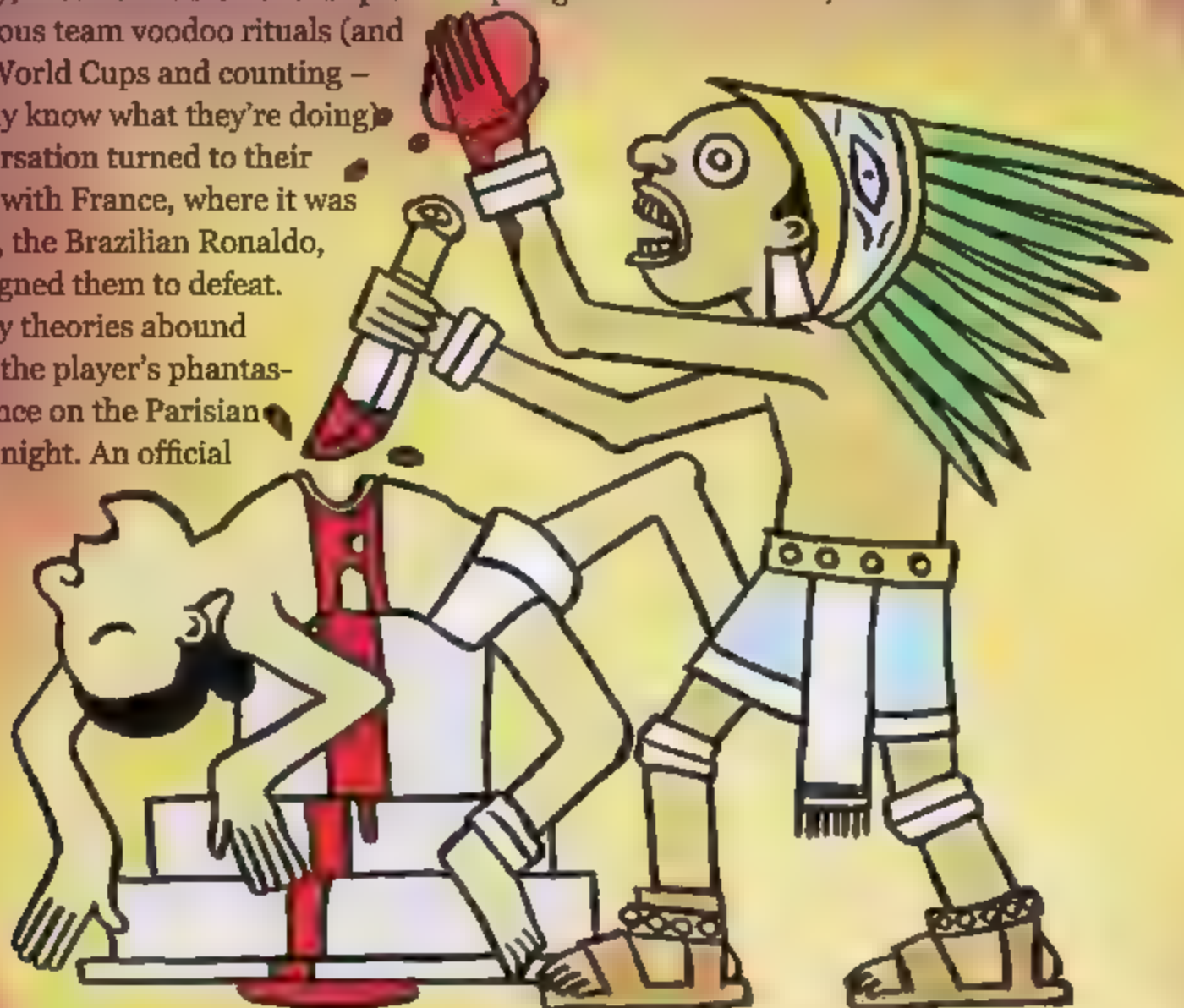
Apparently, Brazil are notorious for practising various team voodoo rituals (and with five World Cups and counting – they clearly know what they're doing). Our conversation turned to their 1998 final with France, where it was their hero, the Brazilian Ronaldo, who consigned them to defeat. Conspiracy theories abound regarding the player's phantasmal presence on the Parisian pitch that night. An official

explanation has gradually emerged, claiming that the player suffered some kind of fit the previous evening, while others contest his life had been threatened by gangsters. Roberts, however, informed me of a rumour that it in fact had to do with a witch doctor employed by the host nation's side. Either way, Brazil's first inkling something was up with their

record scorer supposedly occurred when

Ronaldo refused to participate in a team defecation ritual before the game, a standard magical ritual for all Brazilian sides. The mind boggles.

Although he delighted in the numerous examples of apparently efficacious football voodoo, Roberts was more anthropologist than esotericist, and I was a little



bashful when the time came for me to reveal my own idiosyncratic hunch: that football (and the World Cup in particular) was a corrupt, elaborate and secret religious rite. He frowned helpfully, rummaging through his capacious memory for some colourful information that could help vivify my intuition. He sketched the game's possible origins as a fertility rite, the paramount role of various religious sects in the formation of practically every major club, the positioning of the earliest grounds on the country's juiciest leylines...

"What you really want to look at I suppose," he shrugged, beginning to wane, "are the Mesoamerican ballgames. The Aztecs, the Mayans, stuff like that. I didn't have enough time to open up that can of worms, but it sounds closer to what you're after. I read that, at the end of a national tournament, the Aztecs sacrificed the winning team and the Mayans the losing...." How had this topic evaded me? Enthused, I returned home, cradling this historical precedent, intent on dedicating the next few days to discovering more about this ancient game.

AS THE OLDEST rubber balls exhumed from South American swamps date back as far as 1600BC, it is thought that the Mesoamerican ballgames are at least as old. Although impossible to know the exact permutations of the sport's myriad forms, the majority appear to have required that players strike the ball with their hips rather than their feet — a tricky thing to imagine, as some of these balls weighed in excess of four kilograms, and you could easily be killed if one smashed through the elaborate feathered head gear donned for the more prestigious clashes.

Orwell's quip about football being "war without the shooting" finds its apotheoses here. Often the game literally took the place of war, with regions exchanging spoils and lands in the aftermath of an intertribal tournoi. The game usually pos-

sessed enormous religious significance, and even featured in many of the region's creation myths. As Roberts observed, in certain epochs Aztec champions had the dubious privilege of ritual sacrifice, which to their minds wasn't as bad a trophy as it sounds, as they believed such a death







gave the victim a skeleton key to the highest heaven.

Prior to researching the topic of Aztec human sacrifice, I had assumed the phenomenon to have been little more than a happy pastime of savage bon vivants. So imagine my surprise when I discovered that the rite was in fact the central sacrament of a sprawling theology of guilt! Those singularly bloody Aztecs turned out to be veritable puritans – the gods were thought to regularly sacrifice themselves to maintain human life, and the debt had to be perpetually restituted. Meanwhile, the slightest transgression, the mildest adultery or malevolent thought, apparently propelled the average Aztec into a state of histrionic repentance, with asceticisms and flagellations that could make a Spanish Catholic blush. In fact, I saw a grand irony that their civilisation was eventually wiped out by its occidental doubles. Perhaps the Conquistadors were responding to an unconscious yearning; the Inquisition must have looked like a picnic to a culture where it is thought a staggering one in five children were sacrificed as part of its endless atonement.

IT MADE for a compelling diversion, but while the Mesoamerican ballgames' mixture of sport and ritual was just what I was after, I didn't think I was getting any closer to explaining the 'sacrifice of the hero' in recent international tournaments (Gazza's tears were starting to obsess me). A dawning desperation saw me reach out

to Mark Reeve of ORB Editions, a knowledgeable, erudite occultist — who was as crazy as a Cossack to boot. I emailed him my theory, begging for a magical explanation for these symbolic sacrifices, leaving the ball bouncing firmly in his court. After a few days silence, during which I just about abandoned any hope of revelation, I found his response nestled in my inbox.

*'I agree with you Thomas, it does look rather fixed. I suspect it is a form of the biblical scapegoat ritual of Leviticus 16 (King James Version), which attempted to banish the evil spirit of the wilderness.'*

Illustration by [illegible]

*Like one of the two goats used in the rite, the shamed player represents the "scapegoat" (Leviticus 16:8) (or human scapegoat: a pharmakos), who is sent off into the wilderness by "the hand of a fit man" (the Referee, who fulfils this role both physically and officially) (Leviticus 16:21), and, like the other goat in the rite, the remaining team (or rather, their match) is sacrificed as a "sin offering" to the LORD (Leviticus 16:9). This is a bit of a stretch, but seems plausible. These ancient rites are still practised today in various forms.'*

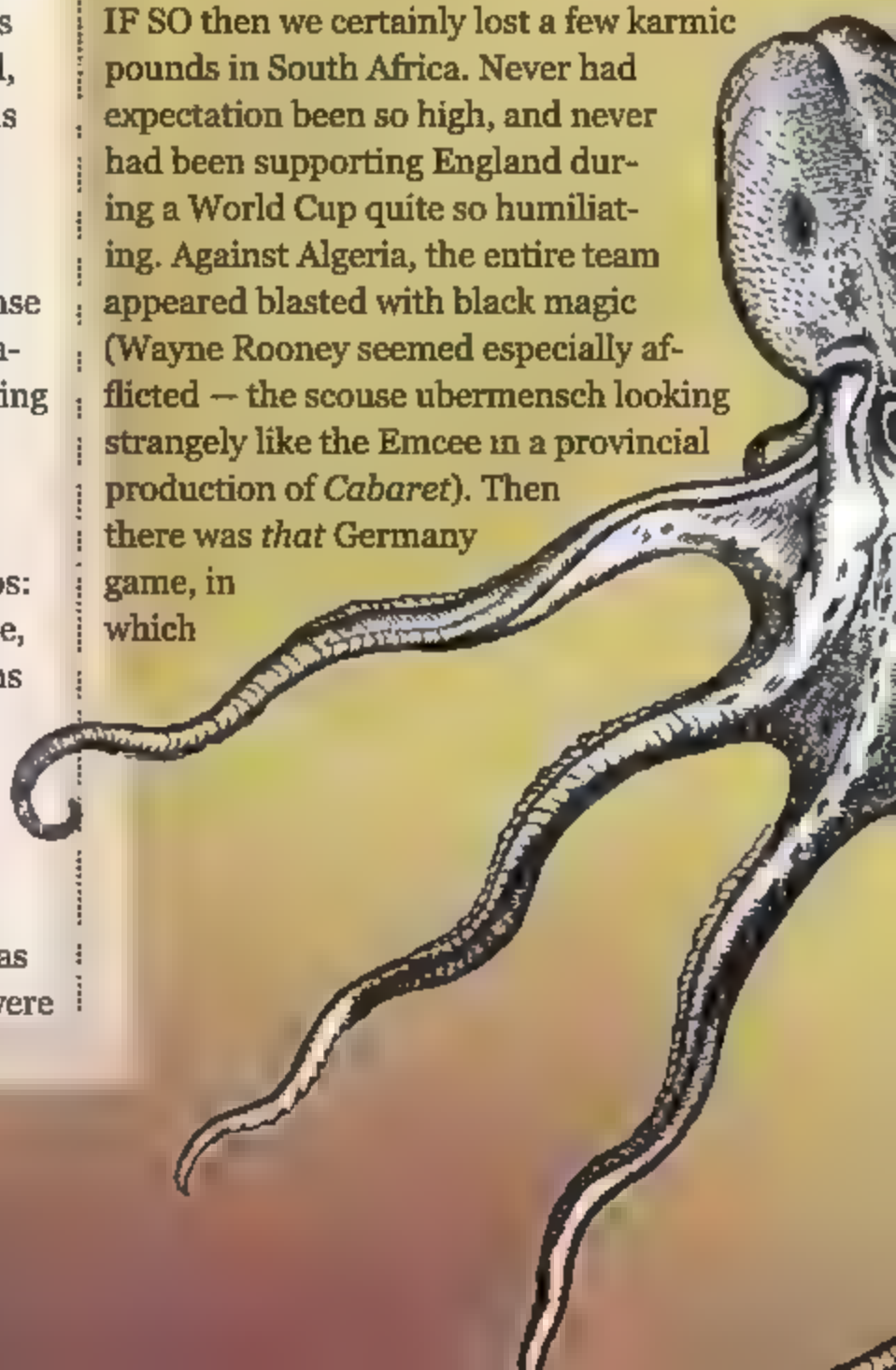
I was enthralled, especially as the very word "scapegoat" had been innocently grazing beneath my nose all along. Was it possible that what was being enacted, in front of 750 million utterly credulous spectators (the estimated number that tuned in for the last World Cup Final), was a ritual *expiation*? But why? Mark thought it might be an attempt to cleanse the game of its fiscal and moral extravagances, but I suspected it to be something more than that...

The World Cup was only a week away, and the English air rang with drum taps: the players exuded a solemn confidence, while the media stirred the expectations of the tribe to feverpitch (sadly, Mars bar neglected to change their name to Believe this time around, though the exhumed George Cross wrapper whispered it all the same). Just thinking of the opening clash with the US was making me nauseous. Once again we were

being seduced to pour our collective hope into this arena of virtual war. Why?

It had always struck me as a dark oddity that England, while shedding blood and flogging arms the world over, sported such tranquil streets. How (assuming that our national diet of human blood is not metaphysically healthy) were we getting away with it? Where was the karmic effect to follow the karmic cause? Well — could it be that our national bad karma was being magically discharged in the virtual realm of international football? That this was the real reason for our forty-odd 'years of hurt'?

IF SO then we certainly lost a few karmic pounds in South Africa. Never had expectation been so high, and never had been supporting England during a World Cup quite so humiliating. Against Algeria, the entire team appeared blasted with black magic (Wayne Rooney seemed especially afflicted — the scouse ubermensch looking strangely like the Emcee in a provincial production of *Cabaret*). Then there was *that* Germany game, in which





our historical foe was invited to hack great strips from the national libido, and the centerpiece, Lampard's disallowed equaliser, happened to be a quite 'miraculous' inversion of the defining moment of our sole football triumph. Some spell, that: I woke up every morning for a week to a vision of the ball bouncing over the line, which then gradually gave way to the disgraceful score line. God knows exactly what magic that image was laced with, but it was definitely ricocheting around in my unconscious.

Due to my researches, I endured the thrashing in cold blood. The first I heard of Paul the Octopus was when my German friend turned up before the game ironically trilling that Paul had predicted a German victory by plucking a mussel from a box with the relevant flag.

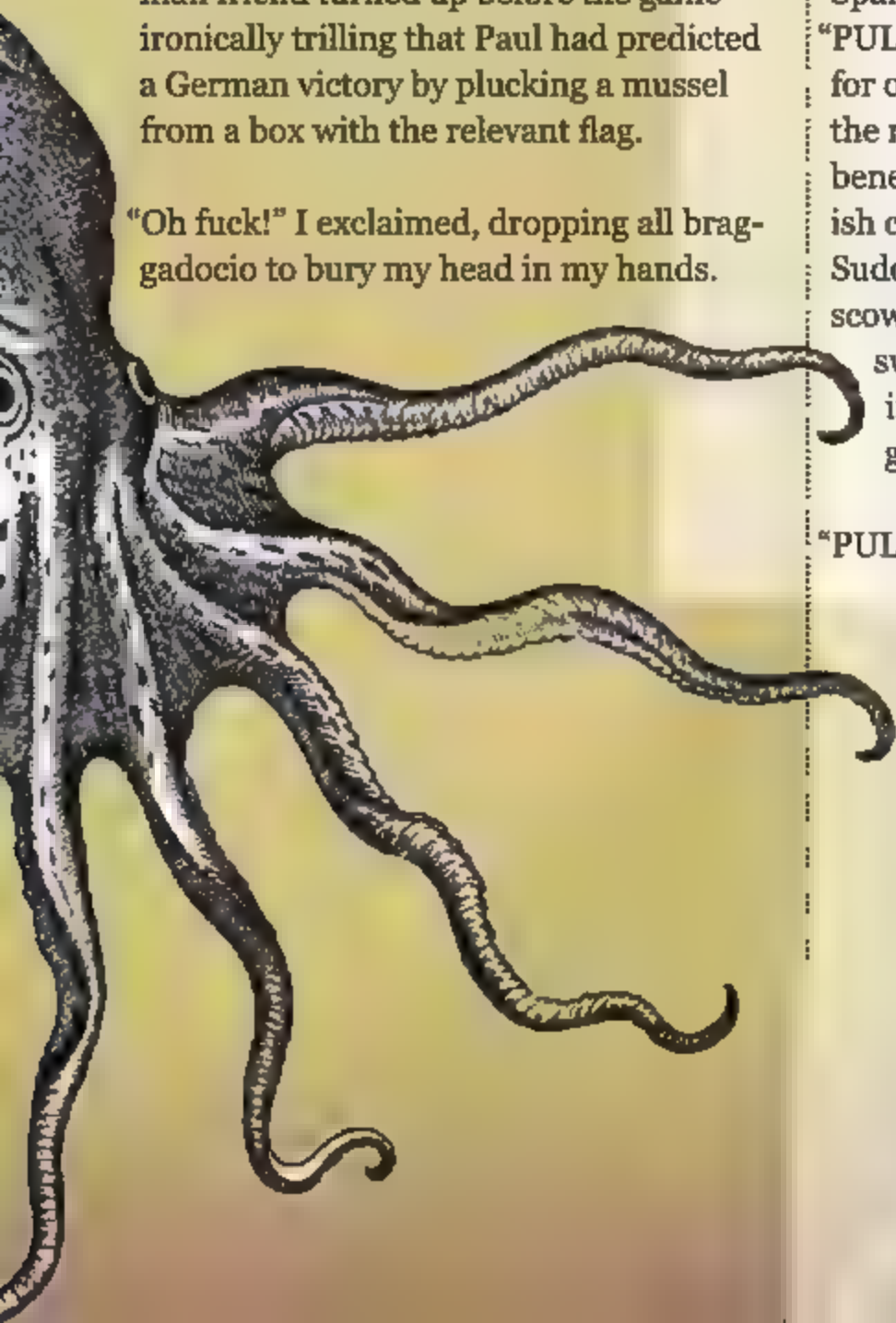
"Oh fuck!" I exclaimed, dropping all bragadocio to bury my head in my hands.

"Vot? You're not taking zis seriously are you?" asked my friend, amazed at the fathomless depths of English fatalism.

You have to remember (to appreciate how far out I was on the crest of this global wave of superstition) that this was before Paul had properly earned his infallible reputation, had the world watching games unravel with all the interest of Cassandra, and had started to look in photos like some extraterrestrial deity (which, as it happens, is exactly what Octopi are in Hawaiian mythology). Paul's transformation was complete by the time Spain were beating Germany, which I watched in a busy boozier. As that game drew to an end, Spanish fans behind me were chanting "PUL-PO! PUL-PO! PUL-PO!" (Spanish for octopus). They were still at it after the match, while the camera sauntered beneath the nose of the celebrating Spanish captain who had headed the winner. Suddenly, before my sharpened eyes, he scowled triumphantly into the lens, and (I swear to God) made a pyramid sign by interlocking his thumb and forefingers together.

"PUL-PO! PUL-PO! PUL-PO!" ■

□ **Author note** Thomas McGrath shouldn't have taken that last trip. And lives in north London



# MIXTAPE #2

Audiocassettes are a thing of the past. They still exist but few people make mixtapes anymore— that is, compilation albums for friends and acquaintances. The modern equivalent is probably a playlist on Spotify or LastFM, which requires zero effort or creativity.

Tell all your mixtape friends that we still love us mixtapes. The most elegant inlay will be the one that says "I love you."

The mixtape this time round is titled 'DICK A TANK WITH THE REQUISITE FIRE POWER'. It was supervised by Phil Tonge and has been in the collection of the British Library since Wednesday.



D.C.L. Dada Cravate Laboratory compilation It's a long story...

SIDE A: THE VERY THINGS: THE BUSHES SCREAM WHILE MY DADDY PRUNES

L.P. 1986 Reflex Records

- ① The Conquerer ② Down the final flight ③ THE BUSHES SCREAM  
WHILE MY DADDY PRUNES ④ INFORMATION ⑤ WALL of FIR  
⑥ World of Difference ⑦ MESSAGE FROM DISNEYTIME ⑧ SHEARING MACHINE  
⑨ PHILLIPS WORLD SERVICE

The Very Things were: THE SHEND:(BASS/VOCALS) DR. ROBIN RAYMOND  
DALLOWAY:(GUITAR) DISNEYTIME (ROBIN HOLLAND):(DRUMS)

DCL LOCOMOTIVE: KING MIDAS IN REVERSE (a-side - 12" Single  
1986 Reflex Records)

RUBELLA BALLET - Ballet Dance. Nothing to do with the DCL but it  
→ fills up the tape.

SIDE B: THE VERY THINGS MOTORTOWN - LP 1988 One  
Little Indian Records

- ① Let's Go Out ② This is Motortown ③ There's a ghost in my  
house ④ SHE'S STANDING STILL ⑤ Walking in the Sand  
⑥ Motortown Epilogue

THE CRAVATS: THE LAND OF THE GIANTS - (a-side 12" Single 1986/7  
Reflex) SHROUD OF NEW YORK (b-side)

THE BABYMEN (12" EP 1988 One Little Indian) ① Legend of The Babymen  
② FOR KING WILLY ③ MARCH OF THE BABYMEN - (EXTRACT)

D.C.L.

If you have enjoyed this compilation you can request more  
DCL product from the same fat bloke. The Shend's real name

20

mead



THE A. M. R.  
1-11-87  
G. M. R. R. R.  
M. R. R. R.

# 3 subject notebook

February 1, 1987

9 1/2 in. x 6 in. 150 Sheets  
3 Sections, 50 Sheets Each  
College Ruled

3/2 x 6 in.

**TRANSCRIPTIONS FROM THE**



# At the beginning

of this new decade, on the eve of the publication of *Beaver Street: A History of Modern Pornography*, in a year that will mark John Lennon's seventieth birthday, the thirtieth anniversary of his murder, and the tenth anniversary of the publication of my book *Nowhere Man: The Final Days of John Lennon*, Headpress has asked me to explain how *Nowhere Man*, which languished unpublished, for eighteen years, became an object of media fascination and ultimately a bestseller in five countries and three languages.

UNIVERSE

THE DIARIES OF JOHN LENNON  
text & images **Robert Rosen**



**TO** do that, I need to begin a half lifetime ago, on Saturday, February 27, 1982, when I returned to New York City, after an eighteen-day sojourn in Jamaica and Bermuda, to find that my apartment had been ransacked. Before leaving on this so-called vacation, I'd spent six coffee-and-amphetamine fueled weeks holed up in my apartment, working sixteen hours a day transcribing John Lennon's diaries for what I believed was a biography Lennon himself had authorized. Now, as I stood in my living room, looking at empty spaces where desk drawers used to be, I knew that everything that I'd been working on — Lennon's diaries, photocopies of his diaries, and my transcripts of his diaries — was gone.

My writing partner, Fred Seaman, called the next day to say that he was the one who'd looted my apartment, and that

my services on the Lennon project were no longer required. Seaman had been Lennon's personal assistant before the murder, and Yoko Ono's executive assistant afterward. "What are you going to do about it?" he asked. "Commit suicide or sell your body on the street?"

For two weeks, paralyzed by fear and depression, I did nothing. But by mid March 1982, I realized that there was something I could do — I had portions of Lennon's diaries in my head; I'd wake up in the morning and little bits and pieces would flit across my brain. So I began to write them down, in an effort to recreate Lennon's diaries from memory, fragment by fragment.

What follows are reproductions of some key pages from my own diaries as I was doing this and simultaneously writing the



**"What I did with John's journals was like translating a foreign language or cracking a code. I had them for over five months before I found the energy and courage to begin."**

first draft of *Nowhere Man*. Along with each page is a transcription of all pertinent Lennon related material on the page. In most cases I've transcribed the material exactly as I wrote it: the misspellings, the syntactical lapses, the embarrassing and absurd personal information. But in some cases, for clarity, I've spelled words correctly or added brief explanations.

Some of these diary excerpts are, essentially, early morning warm-up exercises to get my brain in gear, and tune in to the Lennon frequency, before I began pounding on my typewriter, writing in greater detail what I could recall from Lennon's journals. Other excerpts are my nighttime jottings as I endeavored to remain in the Lennon "zone".

As I reread these pages now, I can see that I was trying to channel John Lennon, to

commune with his spirit, just as I'd been doing when I originally transcribed his diaries. I mimicked his drawings of suns and clouds, which indicated the weather each day, and I mimicked the signs he drew at the tops of pages to indicate how he was feeling. I also used his spellings, punctuations and codes. I painstakingly recorded all my dreams, just as Lennon recorded his dreams, and I attempted to capture moments of my waking life, as it unfolded, in uncensored, self-revelatory honesty — just as Lennon had done in his diaries. The only things I've censored here are direct quotes from Lennon's diaries and the names of non-public figures.

These diary excerpts open in my parents' apartment, in Spring Valley, New York, three weeks after Seaman looted my house. I'd gone there to pull myself together and to figure out what to do next.

GLOSSARY OF CODES AND  
NAMES USED IN DIARY

**F or F.S.** Fred Seaman

**Ft. T.** Fort Tryon Park

**Jane** My literary agent

**JC** Jesus Chr st

**J or JL** John Lennon

**M** May Pang

**NYT** The New York Times

**OP** Observation Post, a college newspaper  
I'd worked on with Seaman

**Peter T** Peter Townshend

**R.S.** Rolling Stone

**S** Sean Lennon

**TY** Thank You

**UMR** Usual Morning Routine

**Y or YO** Yoko Ono

March 19 June 10, 1982

[sic throughout]

**March 19** Not knowing is the worst. It's too painful to believe they can get away with what they did. It's naïve to think there is justice for those without money. Those who cry greed are the greediest. Fred enjoyed me most when I was carrying cartons up five flights of stairs. Did Fred steal on OP? Fred's idea of justice is to ride in limousines while I have no money to eat. The only reason Yoko never screwed me was cause she never had the chance. Fred beat her to it. What I did with John's journals was like translating a foreign language or cracking a code. I

had them for over five months before I found the energy and courage to begin. [The task was overwhelming. There were 5. At first glance, the major problem was the handwriting. It was in the majority of the cases an unreadable scrawl. At first I thought it would be impossible. I made two preliminary attempts to transcribe the most readable passages. I produced, at the most, 7 pages of transcript for one journal. I realized after 5 months of staring at them, the only way to do it was word by word and in many cases, letter by letter. Usually, I had no idea what ☞





= what I write at the top of pages.

March 1945. Col. H.

333 - Reading the VV. Eating peanut butter and banana. Took a walk to the Newset Mall and back after reading NYT. Read out write with want. That is my life in Spring Valley. It's been 6 rites, not 7 as previously stated. Trying to run away from pain, rage, frustration. My life is shattered. Has she tried to call? Does she feel anything? Or is she just use me? Then split when there was nothing more to take when it was time to give. And feel justified cause once I wrote a story. Does she get pleasure from my pain. I have no options. All I can do is wait for a lawyer to get back to me. I've no idea how long it will be. There is nothing to gain from self pity. Not knowing is the worst. It's too painful to believe they can get away with what they did. It's hard to think there is justice for those without money. Those who cry greed are the greediest. Fred enjoyed me most when I was carrying cots up five flights of stairs. Did Fred steal on CP? Fred's idea of justice is to ride in limousines while I have no money to eat. The only reason Toko never screwed me was cause we never had the chance. Fred beat her to it. What I did with John's journals was like translating a foreign language, cracking a code. I had them over five months before I found the energy and courage to begin. The task was overwhelming. There were 5. At first glance the major problem was the handwriting. It was in the majority of cases an unreadable scrawl. At first I thought it would be impossible. I made two preliminary attempts to transcribe the most readable passages. I produced, at the most 7 pgs of transcript for one journal. I realized after 5 months of staring at them, the only way to do it was word by word and in many cases letter by letter. Usually, I had no idea what

he had written until I read it back. Most of the  
time you could only decipher words thru context.  
You'd get 7 out of 10 words in a sentence the more  
out the other 3 by the shape of key letters &  
context. He paid no attention, except in rare cases,  
to the standard rules of grammar or punctuation. The  
more developed passages were stream of consciousness.  
Words became a code. When he was in Japan,  
for example, he'd invariably eat meat and tea for breakfast.  
That became T+T. The letters were the G.S. McCarthy  
was McArthur. Mich Jagger was Mich Fugget. Everybody's  
name was reduced to initials. To be CIA in paper - didn't  
realize it was a joke. Latin American kidnapping threat.  
Cartoon of Fuching yoko coo in court. Jim had with  
cut, TV. many more. Destroyed all evidence to be  
about J, T & S. One election day for T and Jim.  
Jim. He was a bit of a Bush. Lived with Mrs Py  
in the 50s. Fied Chas. at Hot Fudge or Coffee Fudge  
measures. Fied.

March 26 Up & up working "The Crisis" watched  
Fidamp with Mary & Anne. Had some sense of morale  
around that was place in a business project. The term  
Master. Fied a bit of a sense of light. Don't remember  
any details. But there was some kind of reinforcement. Trying to  
keep us from working up a whole lot of talk to them &  
force represented F.S. (I frequently hear in my dreams.  
Pregnant sell to fly.)

March 27 no statement - I heard a lot of Frank's big weight  
a "guru." 2 F yep! 3 Out of 4 is 4. 5 I hear the ideas  
coming at me & do nothing. 6 I hear the ideas



**"Election day 80 J notes they'll kill  
Reagan & we'll get Bush."**

➤ he had written until I read it back. Most of the time you could only decipher words through context. You'd get 7 out of 10 words in a sentence then figure out the other 3 by the shape of key letters and context. He paid no attention, except in rare cases, to the standard rules of grammar or punctuation. The more developed passages were stream of consciousness. Words became a code. When he was in Japan, for example, he'd invariably eat toast and tea for breakfast. That became T+T. The Beatles were the B's. McCartney was McAsshole. Mick Jagger was Mick Faggot. Everybody's name was reduced to initials. Yoko CiA in paper — didn't real-

ize it was a joke.\* Latin Lunatic kidnap threat. Cartoons—Fucking yoko cock in cunt. J in bed with cat, T.V. runny nose.† Doctored all cartoons to be about J, Y & S. [On] election day 80 J notes they'll kill Reagan & we'll get Bush.

**March 20** Had some kind of horrible dream that took place in a housing project. Me, Jerry,‡ Mother. Flying in & out of windows. Night. Don't remember any details. But there was some kind of evil force trying to kill us. Remember waking up in the middle of the night to think evil force represented F.S. (J frequently flew in his dreams. Programmed self to fly.)

\* The *Daily News* had reported that Yoko worked for the CIA. She was furious; she couldn't understand how the reporter could suggest such a ridiculous thing.

But John thought it was hilarious, which upset Yoko even more

† This is a description of a self-portrait Lennon drew in January 1975.

‡ My brother.

I already seems to have forgotten the reason for the  
split. Not craft sex, plain & simple. 5. 77-79  
the majority of J's sex life takes place in his  
dreams. The majority of his life is taking place  
in dreams. There is nothing happening in reality. The  
majority of the journal is recording 1-3 dreams per night in  
incredible detail. Many of them are sex dreams. He  
has apparently learned to "program" dreams. Thinks about  
what he wants to dream about - maybe a woman to sleep  
with, a girl... etc. It works. Fucks in his dreams. Fucks  
Buster in his dreams. Fucks Mary. Looks out his  
window & is drawn crazy by the beautiful women walking  
- and not who he's not fucking but fucks them in his  
dreams. Is drawn by homosexual dreams. [redacted]  
[redacted] - Goes to Dr. Dr. states finger up. "Look I'm  
not a virgin anymore." Detail of dream is astonishing.  
Remembers exactly how his room was furnished. Remembers  
view out window, etc. Many dreams of flying. [redacted]  
Best sex was early 75 when he was still with Mary  
& had not reconciled with John yet. Staying at [redacted]  
[redacted] place. Fucks once a week or so & is 1  
hard job for day. [redacted] The  
time he spent with Mary appears to be the most content  
period of the last 10 years. Clearly the most sexually  
satisfied. John was even happy with them (John m.  
watching them have Mike together. I can't believe it was 10  
years ago. Not walking down St. Ave in his naked. I glad  
Sue when he goes home.) John had Mary cause he  
never saw Cindy more content. Even after he got back  
with I he could never get my out of his mind.



**"Fucks Y in his dreams. Fucks Barbara Walters. Fucks May. Looks out his window and is driven crazy by the beautiful women walking around N.Y. who he's not fucking. But fucks them in his dreams."**

**March 27** Y already seems to have forgotten the reason for the split. Not enough sex, plain & simple. 5. 77-79 the majority of J's sex life takes place in dreams. There is nothing happening in reality. The majority of the journal is recording 1-3 dreams per night in incredible detail. Many of them are sex dreams. He has apparently learned to "program dreams." Thinks about what he wants to dream about & counts down to sleep 10, 9, 8... etc. It works. Fucks Y in his dreams. Fucks Barbara Walters.\* Fucks May. Looks out his window and is driven crazy by the beautiful women walking around N.Y. who he's not fucking. But fucks them in his dreams. Is disturbed by homosexual dreams. [Direct quote from John's Lennon's diary deleted.] Goes to Dr. Dr sticks finger up asshole. Notes: I'm not a virgin anymore. Detail of dreams is astound-

ing. Remembers exactly how rooms are furnished. Remembers view out window. etc. Many dreams of flying. Programmed. Best sex was early '75 when he was still with May & had not reconciled with Yoko yet. Staying at M's eastside place. Fucking once & twice a day + 1 & 2 hand jobs per day. [Direct quote from John's Lennon's diary deleted.] The time he spent with May appears to be the most content period of the last 6 years. Clearly the most sexually satisfied. Julian was even happy with them. (J, JL, & M watching Hard Daze Nite together. J can't believe it was 10 yrs ago. J & J walking down 5th Ave in ski masks. J glad/sad when Ju goes home.) Julian liked May cause he never saw daddy more content. Even after he got back with Y he could never get M out of his mind.

\* Lennon's Barbara Walters dreams were one of the "fictionalized" elements of *Nowhere Man* — information I knew about from his diaries but couldn't confirm with an independent source. In the book, without mentioning Walters, I re-created the texture and flavour of one of those dreams on pages 48-49 (Quick American Archives edition). Since *Nowhere Man* was published, this information has been confirmed from an independent source.

There is no way you can immerse yourself in JL's journals and not feel as if you are being guided by a higher force.<sup>55</sup>

**April 24** I began to live it. I got up and went to bed at the same hours. I recorded my dreams. I smoked "Tai" weed and ate magic mushrooms when I could get them. I ate Japanese food and drank sake. I watched my diet very carefully, sticking basically to vegetables. I drank too much coffee. I felt a lot less depressed about [direct quote from John Lennon's diaries deleted]. I kept my own journal in the same "code." I experimented with fasting. I grew a beard and let my hair grow for 10 months. I experimented with "masks," different sunglasses, leather jackets. I wore John's tee shirts, shoes, scarves, ties. I met his wives, sons, mistresses, roadies, people he grew up with, his staff, his friends....

(During silent vow, Yoko writes of her awe of J's power.) From now on, all Lennon related material is written in red. The only things I avoided were hand jobs, shiastu and \$100,000 shopping sprees. I went to Bermuda (Christ in Jerusalem)\* and retraced his footsteps. There is no way you can immerse yourself in JL's journals and not feel as if you are being guided by a higher force. I felt as if I was transcribing the word of God. I was conscious of the fact there were a lot of people out there who thought John was Jesus. If that was so, then his journals were the Bible. I was a biblical scribe. I ☺

\* This is a reference to my retracing Lennon's movements in Bermuda as if I were following Jesus' footsteps through Jerusalem.





**DAVID KEREKES** Your latest animated film is called *The Hairy Hands*.

**ASHLEY THORPE** *The Hairy Hands* is based on Devon legend. I'm trying to make stories about those neglected aspects of English folklore. One, because it's a mine of stories. And two, because it just seems a bit of a dying heritage. You speak to a lot of people and talk about *The Hairy Hands* and there's a generation down here where the myth's still quite famous. But a lot of people have never heard of it. That's my ongoing project in between writing and painting and general mucking about.

**Do you get invited to screenings i.e. Fangoria?** Yeah. I get invited to a lot of these things. Everyone invites you, but nobody pays for you to go! [laughs] 'Oh yeah, thanks for the invitation but yeah, I can't make it to Rio next week.'

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**Karloff Frankenstein**

"This is very representative of my general style. I tend to create a thick textured layer of paint on the canvas and then work into it, building up layers until it finally becomes figurative. I can never start with a blank canvas. I always need to make a mess first, then tidy it up. The subject is just a natural. I've loved the Universal monsters since I was tiny. I've done a whole series of these classic monsters in this style, working from photographs, as the images from this period are just so beautiful. I'm about to do something similar, in colour and in oils, for Hammer horror."

**In your film *Scayrecrow* each frame is pretty much a painting. What kind of man hours would you say are involved in making a film?** Pretty much all of them took about six months. And that six months was pretty much every evening and weekend for six months. *Scayrecrow* took me hours with the effort that went into it; by the end of it, I actually had to have my hands bandaged up. I hadn't done anything like that before so... I'm sure if a health and safety officer came along, looking at how I was working and the hours I was working, they would have had a fit. I managed to give myself RSI [Repetitive Strain Injury] in both wrists – I couldn't even fucking lift up a cup of tea. I was a wreck. So, yeah, it was six months every evening and every weekend. I was even working on it on Christmas Eve that year.

*The Screaming Skull* was pretty much the same, although I'd learnt a little bit of a lesson. And then when it came to making *The Hairy Hands*, even though it had a bit more money behind it, as is often the case, with additional funding comes less time. I was always fighting for more time. I didn't care about more money: I wanted more time to make it, so I had to find other, digital, ways of manipulating things digitally as opposed to getting the drawing board out and painting everything.

**Everybody I know who has ever done any painting in their life is commissioned at some point by a friend or neigh-**





paintings **Ashley Thorpe**  
interview by **David Kerekes**

**bour to paint a cat or a dog. Yeah! [laughs]** That's inevitable though. You kind of, you sort of march out the door and in your mind you've got your easel and your paints under your arm thinking you're going to be this great artist, and it's inevitable that the first thing people ask you to do are their fucking cats.

The weirdest one I ever had to do – which was one of the first ones I was ever asked to do – was to paint someone's dead niece. Not as she is now, but obviously from a photograph. You get offered it and you just want the money to do the painting, so you go 'Yeah, okay – I can do that. Can you get me a good likeness, a good photograph?' – which they did. And then you start painting it and you suddenly think 'Hmm...not too much pressure here, then.' [laughs] Fucking hell, you know – and the fact that it was a painting of someone's dead niece and it was going to be presented to them as a surprise on the anniversary of that niece's passing. I just thought 'Oh my God, what am I going to do if they don't like it?' What can you say?

**'I must get the nose right...'** Well, yeah – I was shitting myself. And the thing is with my stuff, as you've probably seen, is that my painting style's quite thick and quite impasto and I thought, well, I'm not going to change my style just to try and make it different, because it really is going to go out the window if I do. So I'll just do it in the style that I usually do. And at first, when I presented it to the guy, he looked at it and kind of wasn't too sure because it's different. black and white, thick, lumpy and textured. And then – I took the money and kind of walked off feeling like some kind of Judas, thinking 'Oh brilliant, yeah: you've done a half-assed picture of somebody's dead niece. What a bastard!'

But then afterwards, the nice thing is that they said when they presented it, because it's thick paint and it looks better from a distance, when they actually put it up on the wall they actually really liked the fact that the closer you got to it, it kind of dissolved into textures and from the other side of the room it looked like a photograph. So, that was quite lucky.

I would hesitate to do it again – just for that look of delight going out of their eyes when I handed it across [laughs]!

### Scayrecrow

"This is an illustration that I did for my animation of the same name, released back in 2008. I've always been fascinated by highwaymen so when it came to making a short film using a neglected British legend this immediately leapt to mind. Stylistically it's very obviously inspired by the late seventies and early eighties fantasy and horror illustration I loved back then; artists like Les Edwards, John Blanche, John Bolton, Derek Riggs, all that great stuff. It's a style that I've not really played with before but it became the predominant style for the animation... so I consequently ended up doing literally hundreds of these things!"







**You lived in Greece for a time.** I did. I went out with a Greek girl for about seven years and I moved out there for about a year, until things eventually fell apart. Part of it was just the fact that it's really difficult to get work. Well, it's difficult to get work generally, but to try and get work in a competitive field — illustration and media stuff — was difficult. As much as it was interesting being an Englishman abroad, it did kind of make me appreciate coming home. Ironically, that's when the whole penny dreadful thing and doing the local legends started. Coming back and thinking 'I'm back here again; so what is it about this place that interests me?'

**Of the four prints you've submitted for this portfolio, two of them are direct film references. Is it just the quality of the imagery or is it something more that's appealing to you?** There's

□ **Ashley Thorpe** was born in Inverness in 1972 and grew up in Devon. Having pursued a career in illustration, he decided in 2005 to focus on animation. His four 'Penny Dreadful' shorts to date are:

The Vampire (2002), Scayrecrow (2008), The Screaming Skull (2008) and The Hairy Hands (2009),

a nostalgic element, I think. Apart from the fact that Frankenstein's obviously a classic story and a classic film – it's certainly a nostalgic thing for me. I can remember the day that I painted that particular image – it would have been New Year's Day 2006. It was painted almost as a declaration to myself that I was going to... I was going to get somewhere this particular year. It felt as if – after struggling in Greece trying to adapt to other people's way of living and adapting to other cultures – it almost felt like a declaration, painting that. It was about, let's stop trying to do what other people expect of me, let's just go back to the beginning and let's just embrace the stuff that I like and just do the stuff to show who I am. Then I just sat down and painted Frankenstein. That doesn't mean I'm made out of old body parts and I'm stuck in a cell somewhere [*laughs*].

**Like the rest of us.** Like the rest of us, yeah [*laughs*]. It sounds really sad, but it almost felt as if for a few years – trying to be sensible and grown-up and living in different countries and things – it felt as if I had to be a slightly different person than I really was. It was just funny that the second I got back to England I thought 'Screw this – let's just do what I want to do. Let's be honest. Let's chuck all the black clothes on. Let's paint monsters again. Let's not pretend'. And that was the point where, ironically, everything started going well because I wasn't chasing what other people expected me to, I was just doing what I wanted. And you can be enthusiastic and passionate when you're doing what you believe in. So that's absolutely what the Frankenstein and the Hitchcock represents.

**We all feel at some point that we need to compromise to get anywhere, be accepted, and then suddenly we realise that actually...** It's compromises that hold you back. I felt that for years I was just endlessly compromising to try and get somewhere and ironically, it's that moment when you say 'Fuck this, I can't be bothered anymore'. You know, I've got nothing left to lose – why don't I be honest?

**You asked yourself why it was that you came back to Britain, what drew you back...**

Poverty.

**Poverty! In Greece, you're surrounded by legends. They're all over the place. I would assume you were drawn to that to a degree? But you're drawn more to what you've grown up with?** Yeah, I think so. The funny thing is that when I first went out to Greece, I had it in mind that I was almost going to try

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#### Hitchcock

"Another obvious subject, and painted in that kind of impasto technique that only acrylic will allow (well, unless you have a spare six months to wait for it to dry). I recently rediscovered my enthusiasm for Hitchcock whilst writing 'The Hairy Hands', which constantly riffs on his work and wholeheartedly steals the plot macguffin from 'Psycho'. Apart from his narrative flair and set-piece suspense, I can't help but admire Hitchcock as a character, and a showman second to none. Besides who could resist painting that iconic profile?"





and do what I'm doing with Carrion Films here, but I was going to do it with Greek myths. Long before I thought that I was going to do a series of English legends. I thought I was going to move out to Greece, I was going to make money on the side doing painting, and then I'd make a series of films that were going to make all of Greece go 'Wow' by doing



### Spring Heel Jack

"This is a conceptual image for a future project of mine. Unlike the previous examples, this is 100% digital. Why? The animations have given me scope to experiment with what is possible to achieve with a blend of photography, digital manipulation and paint. I got interested in animation because I wanted to see my artwork move about without losing its textural qualities. Though I do intend to use paint for the final pieces, I find it interesting that there's still this debate about the validity of digital illustration as art. It's a tool, just another media to utilise to chase an idea. This is me chasing my ideas out loud. The final film will be very gothic, very Hammer but ultimately a love letter to the Penny Dreadfuls and Victorian pop culture."

accurate adaptations of Greek myths as opposed to the wonderful but highly inaccurate Ray Harryhausen ones. But the thing that I discovered straight away was that there was a certain way of looking at myths in Greece – that a lot of people didn't seem to be that interested. We think we're hard up here, but in Greece there really isn't any money going around whatsoever and it's even worse now than it was when I was there five years ago. They really don't have any money; they're all just desperately trying to make ends meet. And the myths are referred to in their popular culture but never really talked about too much. I chatted to a few young people over there and a lot of people thought the legends a bit cheesy. They were things they were taught at school, they were sick to death of hearing about them. I think in some ways they're almost received over there as I might have been taught Bible stories: that they've heard them so much, that they're a bit bored of it.

There's a little bit of that sort of attitude here to some extent, with some of the British legends: people either haven't heard of them whatsoever, or with certain more famous ones, people aren't really interested. They just think 'Oh yeah, fairy story nonsense'. But I think I certainly connected a lot more with British legends than I did with the Greek ones. The Greek ones, they enraptured me as a kid, but I'll admit it: I think a lot of that was down to the creatures, the surreal aspect of it.

Whereas there's something about the British myths – it seems to be tied up so much with the landscape and it felt very weird being in Greece because Greece is such an arid place. It's a beautiful place but it's so different, so completely different, you forget how green England actually is. Where you live – it's so green. And that kind of deep, mossy, earthy, legend thing that's kind of seeped into you whether you like it or not. Greece in an arid place, where it's all about the sun and the sea – it's difficult to engage with it in the same way if you haven't been raised there. I was fascinated by it but in the same way it was a romantic thing, whereas the British myths felt like they were part of me.

**I suppose it's difficult to feel any sense of noir when everything's so beautiful and bright.** I used to get really excited out there when it pissed down with rain or there was a thunderstorm. I used to stand out there looking at it, just going 'Wow, look at this!'





It's a piece of home, look!' Because the rest of the time it's hot and sunny for nine months. It got a bit boring after a while. I missed seasons, and I like those crispy, cold, dark days here.

**So were you never tempted to wear short pants over there?**

You know, I don't think I ever did. I went over there and I tried to blend in as much as I could, but then by the end of it I think I started reacting against the culture because by the end of it I'd given myself a crewcut and I was wearing black jeans, a black shirt, and I was listening to the Exploited and Iron Maiden and stuff like that. Anything to just try and remind me of where I came from *[laughs]*. ■

[Transcription: Jennifer Wallis]



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